

# Family Affairs: Guild Regulations and Family Relationships in Roman Egypt

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LOW ECONOMIC, social, and political status, along with familial instability have, at times, all been offered as possible motivations for both the formation of and membership in ancient guilds.<sup>1</sup> Without a family on which to rely, organizations such as guilds supposedly helped to fill an important social and economic gap by providing craftsmen and merchants security through ties of “fictive kinship” and membership in “fictive politics,” as Sandra Walker-Ramisch maintained.<sup>2</sup> This sense of social and economic

<sup>1</sup> See for example J. S. Kloppenborg, “Collegia and *Thiasoi*: Issues in Function, Taxonomy and Membership,” in J. S. Kloppenborg and S. G. Wilson (eds.), *Voluntary Associations in the Graeco-Roman World* (London/New York 1996) 18; in the same volume, T. Seland, “Philo and the Associations of Alexandria,” 112; also the earlier discussions of A. Burford, *Craftsmen in Greek and Roman Society* (Ithaca 1972) 159; R. L. Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them* (New Haven 1984) 31–34; W. A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians* (New Haven 1983) 77–80; for familial instability, see P. Garnsey and R. Saller, *The Roman Empire. Economy, Society, and Culture* (Berkeley 1987) 156–157, and K. Hopkins, *Death and Renewal* (Cambridge 1983) 213. For a recent discussion and summary of earlier phases of scholarship emphasizing the compensatory nature of guild and association membership, see P. Harland, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations* (Minneapolis 2003) 90–97. For the purposes of this article, I use “guild” to refer to the professional associations found throughout the Roman world, *collegium* in Latin sources, *σύνολδος*, *πλήθος*, and *κοινόν* in Greek sources from Egypt, and *συνεργασία* or *ὁμότεχνον* among other terms in Asia Minor. On terms used for guilds see J.-P. Waltzing, *Etude historique sur les corporations professionnelles* IV (Louvain 1900) 236–242.

<sup>2</sup> S. Walker-Ramisch, “Associations and the Damascus Document,” in *Voluntary Associations* 134. On the family in Greco-Roman Egypt see S. B.

deficiency and instability has been inferred from the guild charters (*nomoi*) themselves (specifically regulations regarding burial and support for members in need), from epitaphs of members, and from legal and literary texts that mention the assistance these groups offered to the lower orders (*homines tenuiores*).<sup>3</sup>

However, regulations that outlined provisions for burial and enjoined members to aid colleagues in the face of economic or legal difficulties do not necessarily indicate familial instability, economic weakness, or a member's inability to protect his own interests. The cost of membership as described in guild charters suggests something other than financial hardship as a motivating factor for joining.<sup>4</sup> In addition, close examination of inscriptions and documentary evidence pertaining to guilds, craftsmen, and merchants has indicated that close connections

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Pomeroy, *Families in Classical and Hellenistic Greece* (Oxford 1997) 193–230, and R. Alston, “Searching for the Romano-Egyptian Family,” in M. George (ed.), *The Roman Family in the Empire* (Oxford 2005) 129–157.

<sup>3</sup> Examples from Pliny and the jurists excerpted in the *Digest* have been some of the most influential; see Plin. *Ep.* 10.33–34, 92–93; *Dig.* 47.22. Similarities between *Dig.* 47.22.4 and a guild charter (*CIL* XIV 2112) regarding details for funerary contributions and support for members of the lower orders, initially noted by Mommsen, helped set the parameters of the debate: see Th. Mommsen, *De collegiis et sodaliciis Romanorum* (Kiel 1843) 87–90, and the discussion in J. S. Perry, *The Roman Collegia. The Modern Evolution of an Ancient Concept* (Leiden 2006) 29 ff.

<sup>4</sup> With regard to Egypt in particular, the dues paid by a member of the unidentified guild of *P.Mich.* V 243 in Tebtunis in the first century A.D., for instance, amounted to 144 drachmas per year. Such a sum would have provided enough wheat for a household of four members in Egypt, depending on location, according to the calculations made by R. P. Duncan-Jones; *Structure and Scale in the Roman Economy* (Cambridge 1990) 144. He based his calculations on an assumption that the average person required 10 artabas (30 kg) of wheat per year, at 3.5–8 drachmas an artaba, so four persons would cost between 140 and 320 drachmas a year (this is a basic calculation which does not take into account differences in age or gender). For financial resources in general see J. R. Patterson, “Patronage, *Collegia* and Burial in Imperial Rome,” in S. Bassett (ed.), *Death in Towns. Urban Responses to the Dying and the Dead, 100–1600* (Leicester 1992) 21; O. van Nijf, *The Civic World of Professional Associations* (Amsterdam 1997) 18–22.

existed between guilds, their members, and all levels of society.<sup>5</sup> These texts show that guilds and individual craftsmen and merchants could have ties to social and political elites in their communities, serve as members of councils or representative bodies, or enjoy privileges reflecting increased social status such as designated seating in a theater or stadium.<sup>6</sup> By joining these organizations, members most likely augmented an already strong position in their communities.

In light of recent reconsiderations of the actual position occupied by guilds and leading craftsmen and merchants, compensation for deficiencies in their economic, social, or family lives should be set aside as the sole motivation for guild membership, or at least adopted with some caution. Taking account

<sup>5</sup> See van Nijf, *Civic World*; Harland, *Associations*; I. N. Arnaoutoglou, *Thusias heneka kai sunousias: Private Religious Associations in Hellenistic Athens* (Athens 2003); J. Liu, *Occupation, Social Organization and Public Service in the Collegia Centonariorum in the Roman Empire* (diss. Columbia Univ. 2004); V. Gabrielsen, "Brotherhoods of Faith and Provident Planning: The Non-public Associations of the Greek World," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 22 (2007) 183–210; A. Zuiderhoek, "On the Political Sociology of the Imperial Greek City," *GRBS* 48 (2008) 417–445; P. F. Venticinque, *Common Causes: Guilds, Craftsmen and Merchants in the Economy and Society of Roman and Late Roman Egypt* (diss. Univ. Chicago 2009).

<sup>6</sup> E.g., Kronion the scribe responsible for the *grapheion* at Tebtunis was an influential member of the local community who also belonged to or had ties to a guild. The entries in his own account books (*P.Mich.* II 127.i.20, 30, A.D. 45/6) record payments to a guild president (*ἡγούμενος*), perhaps for membership fees and additional payments to the guild of Harpocrates (known from *P.Mich.* V 248). Other examples of craftsmen and merchants involved in their political communities: *BGU* I 6 (A.D. 158/9, Arsinoite nome), a list of potential members of the board of elders, including a weaver and a butcher; *P.Fay.* 23 (II A.D., Theadelphia), a nomination list that ascribes a *poros* of 1000 drachmas to a wool merchant. A sum of 1000 or 2000 drachmas would have been enough to qualify an individual for a leading position in a community, such as komarch. On designated seating see van Nijf, *Civic World* 210–240; Harland, *Associations* 108 ff.; C. Roueché, "Aurarii in the Auditoria," *ZPE* 105 (1995) 37–50; H. W. Pleket, "Urban Elites and the Economy in the Greek Cities of the Roman Empire," *MBAH* 3 (1984) 3–36.

of both the social and the economic aspects of these groups provides new ways to consider membership in guilds, their charters, and the rationale behind the regulations concerning funerary support, mutual aid, proper guild decorum, and attendance at banquets.<sup>7</sup> Charles Tilly has described a trust network as a group of individuals who “carry on major long-term enterprises such as procreation, long-distance trade, workers’ mutual aid or practice of an underground religion” and are exposed to the “malfeasance, mistakes, or failures” of group members. This provides a useful way to consider and understand the social networks within guilds and the particular rules and regulations they adopted.<sup>8</sup> Considering the benefits of membership in such a network, which included reduced transaction costs, increased contract enforceability, and lessening of risks and uncertainties involved in endeavors, suggests alternative motives both for joining a guild and for the regulations adopted by these groups.<sup>9</sup>

Through an analysis of a group of guild charters from first-century Tebtunis (*P. Mich.* V 243–245), membership lists, and other texts documenting guild activities in Roman Egypt, I

<sup>7</sup> C. Hawkins and A. Monson have attempted similar efforts for craftsmen in Rome and associations of priests in Ptolemaic Egypt and have also drawn on the work of Charles Tilly: C. Hawkins, *Work in the City. Roman Artisans and the Urban Economy* (diss. Univ. Chicago 2006); A. Monson, “The Ethics and Economics of Ptolemaic Religious Associations,” *AncSoc* 36 (2006) 221–238.

<sup>8</sup> C. Tilly, *Trust and Rule* (Cambridge 2005) 4.

<sup>9</sup> For transaction costs see R. H. Coase, “The Nature of the Firm,” *Economica* 4 (1937) 386–405 (repr. *The Firm, the Market, and the Law* [Chicago 1990] 33–55). Coase later provided a more detailed description of the costs of transacting business in “The Problem of Social Cost,” *Journal of Law and Economics* 3 (1960) 1–44: “In order to carry out a market transaction, it is necessary to discover who it is that one wishes to deal with, to inform people that one wishes to deal and on what terms, to conduct negotiations leading up to a bargain, to draw up the contract, to undertake the inspection needed to make sure that the terms of the contract are being observed, and so on” (16). See also T. Eggertsson, *Economic Behavior and Institutions* (Cambridge 1990) 13–16.

argue that guilds, and in particular the ethical regulations dealing with relationships between members and their families, sought to create and maintain bonds of trust between members, rather than to compensate for any deficiency.<sup>10</sup> I hope to show the complementary relationship between families and guilds, and the role guilds played in solidifying family structures and reinforcing social bonds between members, which had an economic benefit for the group as a whole. Such an approach to the *nomoi* reveals that families, and the bonds between families, were major concerns for members and were also closely related to the overall success of a particular group's and each individual's endeavors.

*Families and Guild Membership in Roman Egypt*

Evidence of the activities of guilds of craftsmen and merchants, and of their interactions with civic authorities, can be found throughout Egypt during the first seven centuries of the common era.<sup>11</sup> These groups were usually referred to as a *κοινόν* or a *σύνδοδος*, although at times guilds were simply designated as “the fullers” or “the dyers” from a place.<sup>12</sup> It is difficult to assess accurately the number of guilds active in a particular location at any one time. While there is no shortage of papyri and inscriptions, these usually provide a single snapshot of a guild or guild member transacting business, paying taxes, or honoring a benefactor. Taxation lists often catalogue payments made by individual guilds and give the appearance of comprehensiveness, but comparing these entries with other

<sup>10</sup> *P.Mich.* V 243 (A.D. 14–37) preserves the charter of an unidentified guild; 244 (A.D. 43) is a charter of a group of individuals referred to as *apolusimoi*, most likely a group of veterans on an estate; 245 (A.D. 47) is the charter of a guild of salt merchants.

<sup>11</sup> For a catalogue of guilds in first-century Egypt see I. N. Arnaoutoglou, “*Collegia* in the Province of Egypt in the First Century AD,” *Anc.Soc* 35 (2005) 197–216.

<sup>12</sup> *P.Tebt.* II 287 (A.D. 157–159); the *apolusimoi* of *P.Mich.* V 244 are referred to as a *πλήθος*. For more on nomenclature see Venticinque, *Common Causes* 2 ff.; Waltzing, *Etude* IV 236–242.

contemporary texts related to guilds not listed in these records exposes gaps. A set of price declarations from Oxyrhynchus reveals that at least thirty-three guilds (*κοινά*) were active there in the early fourth century A.D.<sup>13</sup> The number of guilds in this period may have been much higher, based on Fikhman's estimates of different trades and professions mentioned in the documents and van Minnen's of the overall percentage of the population engaged in a "productive craft."<sup>14</sup>

Guilds tended to be small—roughly 10–25 individuals, but larger numbers were possible at certain places and times, such as the *collegium* of carpenters at Ostia whose numbers surpassed 300 (*CIL* XIV 4569, A.D. 198). The membership lists that have survived are often damaged and hard to untangle, but they do suggest that guild and family relationships overlapped. Given the state of preservation of a given papyrus and the onomastic patterns in a given part of the Roman world,<sup>15</sup> it is difficult to know for certain which Onnophris is related to which Harmiusis and vice versa. But some texts are easier to make out than others. As families tend to ply the same trade, it is not surprising to find family members sharing the guild banquet. The charter of the unidentified guild in Tebtunis (*P.Mich.* V 243), for instance, is signed by 17 individuals, 9 of whom appear to come from 4 families, although it is difficult to ascertain

<sup>13</sup> In *P.Oxy.* LIV, with a list of guilds in Appendix II, 230–232.

<sup>14</sup> I. F. Fikhman suggests a number of over 190 for different trades: "Grundfragen der handwerklichen Produktion in Ägypten vom 4. bis zur Mitte des 7. Jahrhunderts," *JWG* (1969/IV) 149–171, at 151; P. van Minnen, "Urban Craftsmen in Roman Egypt," *MBAH* 6 (1987) 31–88, at 45 n.46 (citing Fikhman), and 35 ff. for discussion of population figures and estimates of the percentage of the population engaged in some sort of craft (estimating that ca. 6000–9000 individuals out of a population 15,000–25,000 in the fourth century worked in a "productive craft").

<sup>15</sup> See I. F. Fikhman, "On Onomastics of Greek and Roman Egypt," in R. Katzoff (ed.), *Classical Studies in Honor of David Sohlberg* (Ramat Gan 1996) 403–414 (repr. I. F. Fikhman, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft im spätantiken Ägypten* [Stuttgart 2006] 356–367); D. Hobson, "Naming Practices in Roman Egypt," *BASP* 26 (1989) 157–174.

whether they are sets of brothers, or fathers and sons. Of the 24 members of the ἀπολύσιμοι (*P.Mich.* V 244), also in Tebtunis, 11 come from 5 families, and appear to be sets of brothers.<sup>16</sup> A guild of weavers in Philadelphia includes 6 pairs of fathers and sons (*BGU* VII 1615, A.D. 84).

Several membership lists survive from outside of Egypt and offer a comparison. It appears from inscribed membership rolls from second- and third-century Ostia that similar patterns existed among larger groups, and membership in a guild by families persisted from one decade to the next.<sup>17</sup> In her research on guilds of textile workers, Jinyu Liu studied several guild membership lists from the Latin west. According to a list inscribed in A.D. 205 by textile workers in Solva in Noricum, their guild had 92 members.<sup>18</sup> On the basis of the shared names/*gentilicia*, Liu concluded that 27 of them (29%) may have shared at least one bond of kinship.<sup>19</sup> As Liu observed, without supporting information from other inscriptions or texts, relationships between sons and fathers-in-law are difficult to ascertain. Nevertheless, in all these examples, persons united by at least one bond of kinship with a brother, father, or son account for a significant percentage of the overall membership.

<sup>16</sup> A. E. R. Boak, editor of *P.Mich.* V 244, suggested that the *apolusimoi* were veterans living on an imperial estate; Lori Reed Toepel suggested that they were “local cultivators recruited to work on imperial estates”: *Studies in the Administrative and Economic History of Tebtunis in the First Century A.D.* (diss. Duke Univ. 1976). While no trades are recorded for nearly all the *apolusimoi*, one individual is identified as a carpenter or builder (οἰκοδόμος). A similar membership pattern can be noted in the guild of Harpocrates from Tebtunis (*P.Mich.* V 247).

<sup>17</sup> R. Meiggs, *Roman Ostia*<sup>2</sup> (Oxford 1973) 323.

<sup>18</sup> Liu, *Occupation* 281–291; for the inscription see R. Wedenig, *Epigraphische Quellen zur städtischen Administration in Noricum* (Klagenfurt 1997) 224–226.

<sup>19</sup> Liu, *Occupation* 287–291; on Roman onomastics in general see B. Salway, “What’s in a Name? A Survey of Roman Onomastic Practice from c. 700 B.C. to A.D. 700,” *JRS* 84 (1994) 124–145.

*Guild Charters, Families, and Trust*

As in other areas of the Roman world, groups of individuals united by common occupation formed guilds and drafted charters that described the way in which they intended to function. These charters called for regular contributions, meetings, and feasts; financial assistance to other members; group management of tax burdens; and election of their own officers to oversee these activities and interact with the local authorities on behalf of the group.<sup>20</sup> Inscribed on stone or copied onto a papyrus, these rules were displayed at a meeting place, kept in possession of the guild officers, or in some cases filed at the office of a local scribe.<sup>21</sup>

Although the papyrus is missing its beginning, the charter of the unidentified guild<sup>22</sup> is a good illustration of the ways in which guilds managed their affairs and structured the interactions of members, and of the importance that guilds placed on family relations among the members:

[ - - - ἔτ]ους Τιβερίου Καίσαρ[ος] Σεβαστοῦ Ἡρώνα Ὀρσεύτος  
 σὺν ᾧ ἐπάναγκον εὐωχείσθωσαν κατὰ μῆνα τῆ ἰβ, ἐκάστου εἰς  
 ἐπιμήν[ι]ον τελούντος τὰς ἐξ ἴσου κατ' ὄνομα κεκριμένας ἀργυ-  
 ρίου δραχμὰς δέκα δύο, κατὰ δὲ τοῦ ἀδωσιδικούντος ἐπὶ τούτων  
 καὶ τῶν ἀλ[λω]ν ἐξέστω τῶι προστάτῃ ἐνεχυράζειν. ἐὰν δέ τις  
 ἐκπαροινήσῃ ζημιούσθω ὃ ἐὰν τῶι κοινῶι δόξῃ. ἐὰν δέ τιμι  
 [[ζ]] σύλλο[γ]ος παραγγελῆ καὶ μὴ παραγένηται, ζημιούσθω

<sup>20</sup> In general on guilds and guild charters see A. E. R. Boak, "The Organization of Gilds in Greco-Roman Egypt," *TAPA* 68 (1937) 212–220; Ptolemaic examples: C. Roberts, T. C. Skeat, and A. D. Nock, "The Guild of Zeus Hypsistos," *HThR* 29 (1936) 39–88; F. de Cenival, *Les associations religieuses en Egypte* (Cairo 1972); B. Muhs, "Membership in Private Associations in Ptolemaic Tebtunis," *JESHO* 44 (2001) 1–21; Monson, *AncSoc* 36 (2006) 221–238; the Roman period: Arnaoutoglou, *AncSoc* 35 (2005) 197–216; Venticinque, *Common Causes*.

<sup>21</sup> See *P.Mich.* II 123 recto vi.18, ix.45, x.6; for the operations of scribal offices see in general Toepel, *Studies*, and E. Husselman, "Procedures of the Record Office of Tebtunis in the First Century A.D.," in *Proc. Twelfth Int. Congr. Papyrology* (Am.Stud.Pap. 7 [Toronto 1970]) 223–238.

<sup>22</sup> *P.Mich.* V 243 (BL IX 160).



ἐπὶ μὲν τῆς κώμης δραχ(μὴν) μίαν, ἐπὶ δὲ τῆς πόλεω(ς) δραχ(μὰς) τέσσαρας. [ἐ]άν δέ τις γαμήσῃ, δότω (δραχμὰς) β, παιδογονίου ἄρρενο(ς) (δραχμὰς) β, θηλείας (δραχμὴν) α, ἀγορασμοῦ ἐγγαίου (δραχμὰς) δ, ἀγέλης προβάτων (δραχμὰς) δ, κτηνώ(ν) (δραχμὴν) α. εἴαν τις παρίδῃ τινὰ ἐν ἀηδία καὶ μὴ συνεπισχύσῃ ἐπὶ τὸ συλλῦσαι αὐτὸν τῆς ἀηδίας, δ[ό]τωι (δραχμὰς) η. ὁ δ' ἐν ταῖς εὐωχία<ι>ς κατὰ κλισίαν προαναπίπτων τοῦ ἑτέρου δότω περισσότερον τριώβολον τοῦ ἰδίου τόπου ἕκαστος. εἴαν τις τοῦ ἑτέρου κατηγορήσῃ ἢ διαβολὴν ποιήσῃται, ζημι(ούσθω) (δραχμὰς) η. εἴαν τις τὸν ἕτερον ὑπονομεύσῃ ἢ οἰκοφθορήσῃ, ζημιο(ύσθω) (δραχμὰς) ξ. εἴαν τις πρὸς ἰδιωτικ(όν) παραδοθῇ, ἐγγυάσθωσαν αὐτὸν ἕως ἀργυρίου) (δραχμῶν) ἑκατὸν πρὸς ἡμέρ(ας) λ, ἐν αἷς ἀπευλυτήσῃ τοὺς ἄνδρας. εἴη μὲν ὑγεία· εἴαν τις τῶν συνοδιτῶν τελευτήσῃ, ξυράσθωσαν πάντες καὶ ἐστιάτωσαν ἡμέρ(αν) α, ἑκάστου παραχρῆμα εἰσφέροντος (δραχμὴν) α καὶ κάκεις δύο, ἐπὶ δὲ τῶν ἄλλων ἀνθρωπίνων ἐστιά<τωσα>ν ἡμέρ(αν) α. ὁ ἐπὶ κεφαλικοῦ μὴ ξυρησάμενος ζημιο(ύσθω) (δραχμὰς) δ. ὁ ἐπὶ πάντων μὴ μιανθεῖς μηδὲ [στέ]μμα καταστήσας ἐπὶ τὸν τάφον ζημιο(ύσθω) (δραχμὰς) δ. τὰ δ' ἄλλα ἂ ἐὰν τῶι κοινῶι δόξῃ.

[ – ] have chosen as president for the [ – ] year of Tiberius Caesar Augustus Heron, son of Orseus, in whose company they shall hold a banquet each month on the twelfth, each one contributing for his monthly dues the twelve silver drachmas assigned equally to each. If anyone fails to meet his obligations in these or the other matters, the president has the right to exact pledges. If anyone misconducts himself, let him be fined whatever the society may decide. If anyone receives notice of a meeting and does not attend, let him be fined one drachma in the village, but in the city four drachmas. If anyone marries, let him pay two drachmas, for the birth of a male child two drachmas, for a female child one drachma, for the purchase of property four drachmas, for a flock of sheep four drachmas, for cattle one drachma. If anyone neglects another in trouble and does not give aid to release him from his trouble, let him pay eight drachmas. And each one who in taking seats at the banquets shoves in front of another shall pay an extra three obols for his own place. If anyone prosecutes another or defames him, let him be fined eight drachmas. If anyone intrigues against another or corrupts

his home, let him be fined sixty drachmas. If anyone is given into custody for a private debt, let them go bail for him up to one hundred silver drachmas for thirty days, within which he will release the men. May health prevail! If one of the members dies, let all be shaved and let them hold a feast for one day, each bringing at once one drachma and two loaves, and in the case of other bereavements, let them hold a feast for one day. Let him who is not shaven in case of a death be fined four drachmas. Whoever has taken no part in the funeral and has not placed a wreath on the tomb shall be fined four drachmas. And let the other matters be as the society may decide. (transl. Boak)

In addition to making provisions for attendance at banquets and meetings, the guild members also stipulate a set monthly membership fee, presumably to help offset those and other expenses. A large portion of this charter, however, deals with family life and describes how domestic and guild affairs were intertwined. Seemingly private family events such as the birth of a child, a marriage, the purchase of property, or a funeral were celebrated or mourned by the group as a whole. The guild instituted fines of four drachmas for one “not shaven” (ὁ ἐπὶ κεφαλικοῦ μὴ ξυρησάμενος) upon a member’s death and four additional drachmas for failing to attend the funeral, each fine amounting to 33% of the monthly guild fee. While not as steep as other fines, such as the penalty for prosecuting a fellow member (eight drachmas) or for intrigue (sixty drachmas), this sum was the same fine for missing a meeting in the city.<sup>23</sup> Other charters contained similar provisions. The *apolusimoi* of *P.Mich.* V 244, for instance, expected members to attend the funerals of a colleague’s immediate family (wife, child, brother, or parents), and assessed a fine of four drachmas for an absence (line 16).

Guild charters also contained regulations requiring members to provide assistance to colleagues in need. The members of the unidentified guild pledged to provide surety (ἐγγυάσθωσαν) up

<sup>23</sup> The *apolusimoi* likewise stipulated a fine of four drachmas, equivalent to the fine for missing a meeting in the village: *P.Mich.* V 244.7–9.

to 100 drachmas for colleagues who had fallen into debt for up to 30 days (*P.Mich.* V 243.8–9). The *apolutsimoi* instituted a similar stipulation calling for support up to 60 days for debts totaling up to 100 drachmas (244.9–10). A contract of surety between the officers of the weavers' guild in Euhemeria and the agent of the *exegetes* depicts an example of a guild providing such a service to five of its members (*P.Ryl.* II 94, A.D. 14–37). It is unclear what led to the dispute between the weavers and Paninoutios the wool-worker, but Heracles the guild president (*ἡγούμενος*) and Aphrodisias the scribe (*γραμματεὺς*) agreed to guarantee that the five would be present at any subsequent legal proceedings. Failure by the members of the unidentified guild to fulfill these responsibilities or help another member in need led to a fine of eight drachmas, twice the penalty assessed for failure to attend a funeral or a meeting (*P.Mich.* V 243.6). Apparently, while meetings, gatherings, and funerals were important events in the life of the guild, the membership judged free-riding that resulted in the neglect of another in need to be more damaging and it was discouraged and punished accordingly.

Requirements to aid another member in need and provide for funerary expenses do not seem to argue against the notion of these groups as mutual aid societies. What is less clear, however, is the extent to which such provisions in guild documents provide evidence for or were a by-product of some sort of deficiency in an individual member's life. Sudden deaths and legal troubles could in fact entail large expenses that were difficult to absorb. Funeral costs varied, but some examples indicate that they could exceed the total amount collected in guild fees for a year.<sup>24</sup> Those belonging to a guild likely were in

<sup>24</sup> For ancient descriptions of burial in Egypt see Hdt. 2.85 ff., Diod. 1.91–92. Recent discussions: A. Abdalla, *Graeco-Roman Funerary Stelae from Upper Egypt* (Liverpool 1992), and for late antiquity T. K. Thomas, *Late Antique Egyptian Funerary Sculpture* (Princeton 2000). In general on guilds and funerals, see van Nijf, *Civic World* 31–69. The costs associated with burial varied throughout the Roman period as evidenced by a number of papyri,

a better position to handle such circumstances than other non-elites not associated with a guild. Membership therefore provided an additional security net and offered one way to manage these costs that others in less advantageous circumstances could not have afforded, beyond the bare necessity for ensuring proper burial.

Attendance at funerals likely amounted to more than comfort at a time of loss, and attendance at regular banquets and celebrations to mark significant events in the lives of a guild's members offered more than revelry, although comfort and revelry surely played a part. In general, making these contributions and holding celebrations with fellow guild members to mark the birth of a child, a marriage, a death, or the purchase of property emphasized the relationship between individual families within the guild. Regular meetings, as well as feasts and funerals, offered fertile ground for the creation and maintenance of bonds of trust between members and between their families, trust upon which the distressed weavers of *P.Ryl.* II 94 could expect to rely. Those who did not come to the assistance of their fellow weavers likely incurred scorn not only from the weavers themselves, but also from their families, perhaps to a higher degree than simply missing a meeting. Consistent participation and observance of guild rules likely marked someone out as a trustworthy business partner and brought certain rewards for oneself and his family.<sup>25</sup> In such a context, members

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for examples see A. C. Johnson, *Roman Egypt (ESAR II)* (Baltimore 1936) 322–324. Documents from the first and second century show some variation: *P.Amh.* II 125 (late I A.D., Arsinoe) indicates 200 drachmas (or roughly 25% more than a year's worth of guild dues in Tebtunis) as the total expense for burial; *P.Fay.* 103 (III A.D., Theadelphia), although damaged, details expenses totaling at least 68 drachmas; *SB VIII* 9642 (A.D. 117–138) stipulates 200 drachmas to cover burial costs as part of a will.

<sup>25</sup> For the role that reputation possibly played in such settings, see the example of the Maghribi traders in A. Greif, "Reputation and Coalitions in Medieval Trade: Evidence on the Maghribi Traders," *Journal of Economic History* 49 (1989) 857–882, and "Contract Enforceability and Economic

would have avoided fines not necessarily because they could not afford them, but because the stigma associated with disobeying guild rules ultimately would have proved more costly.

*Crimes and Misdemeanors*

Absence from funerals and neglect of others damaged the bonds of trust within a guild. More damaging still were violations of the home, slander, prosecution of or intrigue against a colleague, to judge from the fines stipulated for these breaches of trust. Yet these precepts in texts like *P.Mich.* V 243 also seem to suggest the continued importance of the family as a unit, and the role that a guild attempted to play in protecting that cohesion, which lies at the heart of relationships between guild members. The terms used to describe the corruption of the home (*οἰκοφθορέω*) and intrigue (*ὑπονομεύω*) seem specifically to entail the ruin of property, adultery, or the undermining of a home. The author of *De liberis educandis* lists corruption of married women (*γυναικῶν οἰκοφθορίαι γαμετῶν*) as one of the dangers and ills of early adulthood, along with gambling and drinking bouts among others ([Plut.] *Mor.* 12B). A fourth-century papyrus of unknown provenance seems to use *οἰκοφθόρος* to refer to adultery (*P.Grenf.* I 53.19). In another example from the fourth century, Basil reports the term in describing intrusion into a nun's house and subsequent slander.<sup>26</sup> The term Boak has translated as "intrigue" against another guild member was used in various contexts. In historical prose, *ὑπονομεύω* could be used of a military stratagem, such as secretly pitting enemies against each other for one's benefit (Dion. Hal. *Ant.Rom.* 3.23.9); while, at a later date, Hesychius equated *ὑπονομαί* with thefts (*κλοπαί*). Whether in a military context or otherwise, however, the different uses of *ὑπονομεύω* seem in general to refer to the undermining of another's efforts

<sup>26</sup> Basil *Ep.* 289.1 *οἰκοφθορίαις*; Hesychius in the fifth century defines *οἰκοφθόρους* as *μοιχούς*.

or property.

These regulations had a larger import than maintaining decorum at feasts and banquets. In comparison to fines for missing meetings (1 drachma in the village, 4 in the city) or for taking the wrong seat at a banquet (3 obols), the stiffer penalties for prosecution and defamation of a fellow member (8 drachmas) and for intrigue and corruption of another's home (60 drachmas, amounting to 5 months of dues) signal the importance of the household as a unit, productive or otherwise, and the role guilds played in attempting to regulate behavior that could affect economic success. The higher fines for transgressing these guild norms show that intrigue, corruption, and slander posed a much larger threat to the operations of the guild. Attacking the reputation of another may have posed a greater external threat than a failure to attend a banquet or funeral, which may not have been perceptible or of consequence to those outside of the guild. Such an attack may have damaged an individual's reputation in the wider community, and quite possibly also the reputation for reliability and trustworthiness of the guild to which he belonged. This might be the logic behind the salt-merchants' decision to also punish those who failed to fulfill "public obligations" ([μ]η [ἀ]γαπλε-ροῦντά τι τῶν δημοσίων) or other public claims by allowing their guild president to arrest the offending party wherever he is found.<sup>27</sup>

Attention to the family composition of guilds and the importance of creating and maintaining bonds of trust between guild members brings the provisions aimed at intrigue or corruption of the home into finer focus. In light of the observed family connections among craftsmen and merchants, and the percentage of guild members who shared a familial bond with at least one other member, the potential for sleights or insults

<sup>27</sup> *P. Mich.* V 245.37–42. The *apolutimoi* similarly invested their president with the power to arrest members who were delinquent of their public tax liability (or at least their share that was to be contributed to pay the *laographia*): 244.18–20.

to affect the relationships with a wider segment of the guild seems not to have been negligible. One can only imagine that violation of a member's household had a detrimental effect on the very bonds of trust guilds attempted to cultivate through communal feasts and celebrations of marriages and births. In such a social and economic context, a violation of another member's household and livelihood, through slander or otherwise, presumably would have led to social and economic fallout for all members, not just the individual whose household had come under attack.

Guilds and associations elsewhere adopted similar rules. A short charter of a group in Athens in the second century A.D. included provisions to expel and fine members who have started fights or disturbances.<sup>28</sup> The Iobacchoi of Athens had regulations for their meetings and banquets that included a prohibition against insults and abuse, referred to as *hybris* and *loidoria* (μάχης δὲ εἰάν τις ἄρξῃται ἢ εὐρεθῇ τις ἀκοσμῶν ἢ ἐπ' ἀλλοτρίαν κλισίαν ἐρχόμενος ἢ ὑβρίζων ἢ λοιδορῶν τινα) with an accompanying fine of 25 light drachmas.<sup>29</sup> Arnaoutoglou has argued that such provisions regulating behavior and punishing transgressions "aim at reducing the threat of social unrest due to the activity of associations, without any immediate cost to the Roman administration."<sup>30</sup> Arnaoutoglou's assertion suggests that the authorities either induced guilds to include such clauses or that the guilds were responding to what is perceived to be standard elite anxiety about their gatherings.

It is difficult, however, to divine a uniform policy on the part of the local or imperial authorities towards guilds from inscrip-

<sup>28</sup> IG II<sup>2</sup> 1369.40–42: εἰ δὲ τις μάχας ἢ θορύβους κεινῶν φαίνοιτο ἐκβαλλέσθω τοῦ ἐράνου.

<sup>29</sup> IG II<sup>2</sup> 1368.72–80. Light drachmas, λεπτοῦ δραχμαί, were the bronze drachmas now in use at Athens as opposed to the silver denarius. On the various denominations see the comments of A. S. Walker in J. H. Kroll, *Athenian Agora XXVI The Greek Coins* (Princeton 1993) 118–120.

<sup>30</sup> I. N. Arnaoutoglou, "Roman Law and *collegia* in Asia Minor," *RIDA* 49 (2002) 27–44, at 43.

tions, papyri, and legal and literary texts. The evidence seems to suggest that being a guild of weavers was acceptable, but not being a guild of weavers that caused a riot.<sup>31</sup> Consideration of the maintenance of trust networks and overlapping concerns for families and financial matters closely related to guild operations provides another explanation besides a desire for a pleasant dining experience or fears of Roman intervention. Guild members likely shared business interests not limited to their trades, such as a property sale involving members of a guild in Tebtunis.<sup>32</sup> What began in the guild hall continued and extended beyond it in the form of closer business partnerships and social and economic connections.<sup>33</sup>

### *Beyond the Banquet*

One such relationship that extended outside the guild hall, and must have been common among the craftsmen that belonged to these groups, is apprenticeship.<sup>34</sup> Provisions against

<sup>31</sup> For instance, see section 74 of the *lex Irmitana* (A.D. 91): J. Gonzalez and M. Crawford, "The Lex Irmitana," *JRS* 76 (1986) 147–243. The *Gnomon of the Idios Logos* (*BGU V* 1210) section 108, οἱ σύνοδον νέμοντες κατεκρίθησαν ἐκ (δραχμῶν) φ, ἐνίοτε μόν[οι] οἱ [π]ρο[σ]τάται, "members of guilds have been fined 500 drachmas; sometimes only the officers," does not reveal what led to the fine or under what circumstances guilds were thought to have fallen out of favor or violated the law.

<sup>32</sup> *P.Mich.* V 248 (mid I A.D.) is a membership list of an unidentified guild; in the property transaction *P.Mich.* V 305, the seller and the buyer were both members of this group.

<sup>33</sup> Perhaps these provisions were all the more important given what Ari Bryen has indicated about the legal ramifications of insults and abuse both physical and verbal: *Violence, Law and Society in Roman and Late Antique Egypt* (diss. Univ. Chicago 2008) 66–78, and "Visibility and Violence in Petitions from Roman Egypt," *GRBS* 48 (2008) 181–200.

<sup>34</sup> The majority of the evidence for apprenticeship pertains to the weaving trade, but see *P.Mich.* V 346b (A.D. 16, Tebtunis), a contract for learning the building trade in an apprenticeship that would last six years, and *P.Oxy.* XXXVIII 2875 (early III A.D.), a contract stipulating a three-year apprenticeship for learning the building trade (οἰκοδομικ[ῆς] τ[έ]χνης); see also *PSI VIII* 871 (A.D. 66), a petition for a change of residence for an apprentice living with a master bronze-smith from Oxyrhynchus. For evidence of



intrigue, slander, and prosecution of another member may have been more significant on account of the apprenticeship practices employed by craftsmen in Roman Egypt. The apprenticeship period seems to have ranged from one to six years, during which time the apprentice lived and worked as a member of the master craftsman's household. The expenses incurred by all parties were significant. For his part of the agreement, the master craftsman usually provided his apprentices room and board, clothing, and a set monetary amount.<sup>35</sup> The family of the apprentice would no longer have access to the production of that individual for its own business, but did derive some economic benefit as another now provided for that son, daughter, or slave for the duration of the contract. In addition, both the family of the apprentice and that of the master craftsmen would potentially gain by forging or maintaining social and economic relationships and bonds of trust with another household that might last beyond the conclusion of the apprenticeship period.

Although sons often followed fathers in a particular trade, fathers did not typically take on their own sons as apprentices. Instead, craftsmen seem to have apprenticed their own children or household members in the homes or workshops of

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weaving guilds in Roman Egypt see *P.Ryl.* II 94 (A.D. 14–37, Euhemeria) and *BGU* VII 1615 (A.D. 84, Philadelphia); *P.Mich.* II 121 recto IV.vi (A.D. 42), an abstract of a contract concluded between members of the weavers' guild at Kerkesoucha Orous; II 123 recto iii.41 (A.D. 45–47) and 124 recto ii.19 (A.D. 46–49) mentioning a *πλήθος γερδίων* in registers from the scribal office at Tebtunis; *Chrest. Wilck.* 57 (A.D. 92) mentioning a president of the weavers of Soknopaiou Nesos (*ἡγούμενος γερδίων τῆς αὐτῆς κόμης*); *I.Fayum* II 122 (A.D. 109) mentioning a dining room (*διπνητήριον*) used by the weavers from Theadelphia dedicated by the officials of this group (*πρεσβυτέρων γερδίων*); and *P.Phil.* 10 (A.D. 139), a petition to the *strategos* from the guild of weavers in Philadelphia. Apprenticeship arrangements most likely would have been a common element of life in these weaving guilds.

<sup>35</sup> For a discussion of these texts and an analysis of apprenticeship patterns see K. Bradley, *Discovering the Roman Family: Studies in Roman Social History* (Oxford 1991) 107 ff.; Hawkins, *Work* 122–130.

other craftsmen. For example, weavers sent their sons and daughters, as well as slaves, to live with other craftsmen and learn the trade, as opposed to instructing them themselves. Two weavers living and working in Oxyrhynchus during the first century, Tryphon and Pausiris, operated in this manner.<sup>36</sup> Tryphon arranged for the apprenticeship of his brother Onnophris to a weaver named Abaros and the apprenticeship of his son Thoonis to a weaver named Ptolemaeus rather than train them himself.<sup>37</sup> Pausiris, too, chose to send his sons to other weavers as apprentices: a son named Pausiris was apprenticed to Epinikos, and two others, Dioskos and Ammonius,

<sup>36</sup> Tryphon is well known from a number of documents, 43 texts at current count. See M. V. Biscottini, "L'archivio di Tryphon tessitore di Oxyrhynchus," *Aegyptus* 46 (1960) 60–90, 186–292; M. Piccolo, "Osservazioni ad alcuni papiri dell'archivio di Tryphon," *Aegyptus* (2003) 197–213. A number of texts mention Pausiris and his activities: see *P.Mich.* III 170–172, X 598, and *P.Wisc.* I 4 for details; discussion in T. Gagos, L. Koenen, and B. E. McNellen, "A First Century Archive from Oxyrhynchus or Oxyrhynchite Loan Contracts and Egyptian Marriage," in J. H. Johnson (ed.), *Life in a Multi-Cultural Society: Egypt from Cambyses to Constantine and Beyond* (Chicago 1992) 181–205. There is no way to be certain whether Tryphon and Pausiris were members of a weaving guild, nor is there any mention of a guild of weavers at Oxyrhynchus at this time, although the suggestions of Hawkins (*Work* 129–130) that both the existence of a guild and their membership in it are plausible seems reasonable given what is known about weaving guilds in general. That none of these documents specifically mentions their status as members of such a group is not reason to discount this possibility: members of the same guild may not have mentioned their guild ties in documents pertaining to their business dealings, apprenticeship contracts, or otherwise. In fact, guild membership seems to have been something included in texts intended for audiences beyond the guild itself, such as official documents and tax receipts. Aur. Leonides, an official of the tow-workers guild in Oxyrhynchus, made reference to his guild membership and office in official documents including a list of nominations and a receipt, such as *P.Oxy.* XLV 3261 (A.D. 324) and 3262 (A.D. 328), but not in his private economic transactions as reflected in leases and contracts, such as 3254–3259 (A.D. 312–323), *P.Oxy.* I 103 (A.D. 316), XXXI 2585 (A.D. 315), *PSI* V 469 (A.D. 334).

<sup>37</sup> Onnophris: *P.Oxy.* II 322 (*SB* X 10236, A.D. 36); Thoonis, 275 (*Sel.Pap.* I 13, A.D. 66).

to Apollonius.<sup>38</sup> Pausiris opted to send his children to the workshops of other weavers even though he had taken on apprentices of his own, including Amoitias the nephew of the master weaver Epinikos, the same man to whom Pausiris apprenticed his own son four years later.<sup>39</sup> The particular arrangements made between Pausiris, Apollonius, and Epinikos suggest social and economic ties with these three families of weavers in Oxyrhynchus sustained over time, relationships presumably augmented through reciprocal exchange of apprentices.

In the course of an apprenticeship, or in the cases described above, there were numerous chances for abuse of trust, mistreatment of an apprentice, or failure to fulfill the terms of an agreement.<sup>40</sup> While it might have been difficult to prove that someone neglected to teach an apprentice the craft of weaving as the weaver understood it (*τὴν γερδιακὴν τέχνην καθ' ἃ καὶ αὐτὸς ἐπίσταμαι*),<sup>41</sup> legal difficulties, including slander or intrigue, might become an issue at any time on both sides of the contract. Matters of payment involved at various times during the apprenticeship could also pose problems and lead to friction between the parties, whether for maintenance, tax pay-

<sup>38</sup> The younger Pausiris: *P.Mich.* III 172 (A.D. 62); Dioskos: *P.Wisc.* I 4 (A.D. 53); Ammonius: *P.Mich.* III 170 (A.D. 49).

<sup>39</sup> *P.Mich.* III 171 (A.D. 58). Amoitias was apprenticed by his aunt Helene acting with her husband Epinikos the master weaver after Amoitias' father Pasion had died.

<sup>40</sup> Hawkins, *Work* 121 ff., describes the numerous pitfalls that could be experienced by the parties involved. For discussion of the complexities involved in workshop dynamics in modern Crete, see M. Herzfeld, *The Body Impolitic: Artisans and Artifice in the Global Hierarchy of Value* (Chicago 2004).

<sup>41</sup> *P.Mich.* V 346a.3 (A.D. 13). It would perhaps be too perfect that the contract *P.Oslo* III 141.11 (A.D. 50) actually refers to a guild *nomos* when stipulating that the apprentice will not be absent and will accompany Theabennis and do everything he says “in accordance with the law” (*συ[νακολουθοῦντα αὐτῷ κατὰ τὸν] νόμον καὶ ἐπιτελῶντα π[άντα τὰ ἐπιταχθησόμενα*) as opposed to “all over the nome” as suggested by van Minnen, *MBAH* 6 (1987) 69–70, citing *P.Mich.* V 355 (= *PSI* VIII 902) as a parallel.

ments, repayment of a loan by the family of the apprentice, or a master's promise to provide tools of the trade at the close of an apprenticeship.<sup>42</sup> Obligations meant to be fulfilled at the end of a contract may have been particularly difficult to collect if not for a craftsman's concerns for perpetuating these bonds of trust with another craftsman and signaling his trustworthiness to others in the guild not involved directly in the particular transaction. Preservation of these long-term enterprises exposed to such risks may have been precisely the sort of situation at which the precepts were aimed that sought to limit slander, intrigue, prosecution, or corruption of a household.

### *Conclusions*

An analysis of the guild charters that takes into account the social and economic context in which craftsmen and merchants operated shows that these documents were more than just rules for proper decorum at a banquet. In a setting in which families and households were closely linked in a social and economic sense, the charters set out what amount to good or ideal business practices for a particular group. From this vantage point, it seems that far from supplanting or compensating for deficiencies in family structures, in many cases guilds provided a framework in which the economic success of one household was intimately related to that of another. In such a social network, communal feasting and celebrations, so often the exclusive focus of studies, played a part along with behavior regulations to promote stability within and between households, and in the social network as a whole. Infractions such as slander, intrigue, or prosecution of another member presented a threat to the collective activity of the group, and were discouraged accordingly. The economic benefits offered to all members by a re-

<sup>42</sup> Repayment by the apprentice's family: *P.Tebt.* II 384 (A.D. 10); master's contractual promise: *P.Mich.* V 346b.6 (A.D. 16), which states that the master builder would provide the apprentice with a chiton worth 8 drachmas and an adze worth 4 drachmas, μετὰ χρόνον δοῦναι κιθῶ(να) (δραχμῶν) ἡ καὶ σκέπαρνον (δραχμῶν) δ.

duction of transaction costs, increased contract enforcement, and easy access to trusted business partners and associates reinforced the prohibitions and induced proper economic and social behavior among members.

Including provisions for burial in guild regulations or offering legal assistance does not need to imply a lack of reliance on one's kin or community as has often been suggested.<sup>43</sup> Although not all guild members were created equal, and some were likely better off than others, members in Egypt or elsewhere needed a baseline of wealth in order to sustain even the most basic membership in such groups. While in the perspective of a wealthy Roman like Pliny, everyone likely seemed relatively poor, burial by a guild or in a communal sepulchre may have represented an additional way of asserting one's status, something that would not have been afforded to individuals lower on the social pyramid.<sup>44</sup> Taking advantage of burial by a guild as a form of life insurance that allowed members and their families a means of absorbing funeral costs was itself a luxury offered to those who could already shoulder the burdens of guild membership, and not necessarily an opportunity for the destitute to avoid an anonymous burial. Guild membership as a strategy for confronting the uncertainties of life and business was not necessarily an alternative to relying on bonds of kinship. Joining guilds and developing bonds of trust supplemented and augmented already existing networks. Furthermore, as family members often belonged to the same guilds, a lack of involvement on the part of the family and forced reliance on "fictive kingroups" may be overstated. We have seen that fostering these sorts of bonds certainly was good for business even if it was not a necessity for survival. This might lie behind the clauses in the charters that penalize non-attendance at funerals. These clauses, going beyond protocol for the death of a member, also cover his immediate family

<sup>43</sup> Hopkins, *Death and Renewal* 214.

<sup>44</sup> Van Nijf, *Civic World* 31–69.

(father, mother, wife, child, brother or sister). While money might not have been an issue, or at least the only issue, non-attendance at group functions or failure to offer support for a fellow member in need, celebrate a birth, or mourn a death in the family, may have produced other social and economic benefits.<sup>45</sup>

*December, 2009*

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<sup>45</sup> This article draws on papers presented at the meeting of the Classical Association of the Middle West and South in 2007 and at a joint meeting of the Ancient Societies and Late Antiquity and Byzantium Workshops at the University of Chicago in autumn 2008 as well as research related to my own dissertation *Common Causes*. I owe a debt of thanks to Ari Bryen, William Bubelis, Fanny Dolansky, John Gruber-Miller, Cameron Hawkins, Janet Johnson, David Martinez, and Jennifer Westerfeld for comments and feedback during the transformation from conference paper into journal article. Finally, I would like to thank the anonymous readers and the editors for their insightful feedback and valuable comments.